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MEDICAL SERVICES IN THE WEHRKREIS

1. To a certain degree the German Wehrkreise correspond to the service commands of the continental United States. They are administrative military headquarters, of corps status and with territorial responsibility. One of the main functions of the Wehrkreis is to take as much work as possible off the shoulders of the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (High Command of the Armed Forces). There is an extensive policy of decentralization which naturally results in a wide measure of autonomy for the Wehrkreise. The Central authorities usually confine themselves to defining policy in broad terms and it is left for the Wehrkreise to apply these directives as suits their own needs. Consequently, the outline presented here is a more or less composite picture of the medical services of a Wehrkreis, and in the individual Wehrkreis one may encounter a number of minor departures from this standard.

2. The Chief Medical Officer of the Wehrkreis is a member of the staff of the Stellvertretender Generalkommando or Wehrkreis Commander, and bears the title of Korpsarzt or Wehrkreisarzt (Wehrkreis Surgeon). In technical matters the Korpsarzt is directly responsible to the Army Medical Inspectorate in the General Army Directorate, or OKW/AHA (S.In.), which is equivalent to the Office of the Surgeon General. (See Medical Intelligence Summary No. 22.) The Medical Section of Wehrkreis Headquarters is designated as Abteilung IV b, the usual designation for the Medical Service of a German Military Headquarters. The Medical Service of the Wehrkreis is under the direction of the Korpsarzt, but he receives additional help from other administrative units of the Wehrkreis headquarters, which will be described later. The actual composition of Abteilung IV b as regards personnel, is not known, but the subordinate organizations elsewhere in the Wehrkreis are described below.

3. Units Subordinate to the Wehrkreis Medical Services.

a. Sanitätsabteilungen. A Sanitätsabteilung is literally a medical division or group. It is an administrative unit of either regimental or division status, the commanding officer of which is known as a Chofarzt. The Chofarzt is responsible for all medical activities in his area, including subordinate Hospitals (see below) and such Ersatzeinheiten or Replacemont and Training units as happen to be in his area. The Chofarzt acts as an intermediary or liaison between those units and the Korpsarzt at Wehrkreis Headquarters. It is not clear to just what subdivisions of the Wehrkreis the Sanitätsabteilung is attached, but there are several that appear in each Wehrkreis. Sanitätsabteilungen also serve for the administrative and professional control of hospitals in the area. In this they are assisted in some Wehrkreise by Lazarettbezirksdirektionen or Hospital area directorates. These organizations do not appear in every Wehrkreis and this may be one field in which the Wehrkreis is allowed considerable individuality.

b. Hospitals. Hospitals are medical units of battalion status attached to the Hospitalsstandortsvorwaltung or administrative branch of the Wehrmachtcommandantur (Armed Forces Headquarters). They form Abteilung IV b, the Medical Section, and the medical officer commanding the unit is known as the Chofarzt or Standortsarzt. These units may be located in the Commandantur proper, or they may be in a garrison hospital in the vicinity. The physicians assigned to the Hospitalslassungsstellen, or Army Discharge Centers, in the area, are technically subordinate to the

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Standortsarzt, but he may call for their services only after the regular working hours of the Hoorosortlassungsstelle. The Heeresanitätsstaffeln serve as medical staff sections, and supervise medical and sanitary matters in the district. In addition they maintain Krankenreviere or dispensaries in all garrison areas where the military establishments have no medical officer on their T/O.

c. Hospitals. As mentioned above hospitals in the Wehrkreis are subordinate to the Korpsarzt and are controlled by Sanitätsabteilungen occasionally helped by the Lazarettbezirksdirektionen. This is principally a matter of medical administration and professional control of hospitals. Other administrative matters in hospitals such as handling of civilian personnel, auditing of accounts, legal matters, and transportation of the dead are handled by a section of the Wehrkreisvorwaltung or Administrative Headquarters of the Wehrkreis known as Sachgebiet E. The various sections of the Wehrkreisvorwaltung are described later. The types of hospitals ordinarily encountered in the Wehrkreis are as follows:

(1) Reservolazarett. The Reservolazarett are the equivalent of the named general hospitals of the Zone of the Interior, and the numbered general hospitals of the Communications Zone. Reservolazarett are found in greater numbers than any other type hospital in the Heimat. They may be located in all types of buildings, and consequently very greatly in size. The bed capacity may range from 50 to 1200 beds. Some few may be larger. Many civilian hospitals have been designated as Reservolazarett, and some of those have retained their civilian staff. Not much is known of the T/O of Reservolazarett staffed by the Army Medical Services. An outline of the personnel of medical installations, published in 1941, indicates that certain overhead personnel are present in the Reservolazarett regardless of its size. These include:

- (a) Chief Medical Officer, Commander.
- (b) 1 Master Sergeant.
- (c) 1 Administrative Official per 80 beds.
- (d) 1 Army Pharmacist for 200-400 beds,
2 Pharmacists for larger numbers.
- (e) A variable number of housekeeping and office personnel.

To furnish medical care to the patients, the outline describes medical units or cells, each capable of caring for 60 serious cases or 120 minor cases. The number of such units assigned to the Reservolazarett depends upon its size. The composition of the medical unit is as follows:

- (a) 2 Medical Officers, including one Section Chief.
- (b) 1 Medical NCO as Section Supervisor.
- (c) 4 Medical NCO's or Nurses.
- (d) 3 Medical enlisted men.

Reservolazarett are designated by the name of the place in which they are located. When there is more than one in the same town, differentiation is by the use of Roman numerals, as Reservolazarett IV Dresden. In some localities, such as Vienna, where there are large numbers of Reservolazarett, they have been organized into a number of hospital groups or centers, each with a single Roman numeral; individual hospitals in a group are identified by affixing a letter to the Roman numeral, as XXII a, or XXII b. In Berlin, Reservolazarett bear Arabic numerals.

(2) Standortlazarett (Garrison or Station Hospitals). These are known to have existed in every garrison area before the war. Many are now being operated as Reservolazarett, possibly with the same personnel. The designation Heeresstandortlazarett is also seen, but is probably only a variation of the above. The T/O of those units is not available.

(3) Hoorosongesungshoimo, (Army Convalescent Homes). There are several types of these depending upon the character of the diseases for which

they are designed, and upon the type of patient, whether officers or enlisted personnel. These homes may occupy entire hospitals and may be an alternative designation for certain types of Reservelazarette. Others may occupy only wings of existing civilian hospitals.

(4) Heereslazarett für Lungenkranke. Army Tuberculosis Hospitals.

(5) Kurlazarett des Heeres or Reserve Kurlazarett. Army Sanatorium or General Sanatorium.

(6) Kriegsgefangenenlazarette. Prisoner of War hospitals.

(7) Reserve-Kriegslazarette. Hospitals bearing this designation have been identified either in the General Government of Poland or in other frontier areas. These hospitals appear to be army evacuation hospitals to which have been assigned some of the functions of the numbered general hospitals in the Communications Zone.

(8) Other terms which may be found in reference to hospitals include Hauptlazarett, (Main Hospital) and Teil-Lazarett, (Branch Hospital), which are believed to be separate designations for parts of a Reservelazarett.

d. Hygionische (Bacteriologische) Untersuchungsstelle. Those research centers are called by both titles, and their functions undoubtedly cover both fields. These are stated to be in each Wehrkreis, but very few have been identified. They are subordinate to the Korpsarzt, Abteilung IV b, Wehrkreis Kommando for matters of administration and discipline, but are responsible to the Militärärztliche Akademie in all technical matters. This latter, the German Military Medical Academy, is under the OKH/AHA (S.In.), but serves both the Army, the Navy and the Air Force.

e. Chomische Untersuchungsstelle. (Chemical Research Centers). Those also are theoretically present in every Wehrkreis. The chain of command and responsibility is the same as for the Hygiene Research Centers.

f. Sanitätspark. (Medical Depots). Medical Supply within the Wehrkreis is the responsibility of Abteilung IV b, the Medical Section, in all technical matters, while for administration they are subordinate to Sachgebiet E of the Wehrkreisvorwaltung, as in the case of hospitals. In technical matters the eventual authority and responsibility for medical supply is in the OKH/AHA (S.In.). Medical supplies for the Wehrkreis are received from the Hauptsanitätsspark (Central Medical Depot) in Berlin, or direct from manufacturers, and are redistributed through their own medical depots which are as follows:

(1) Wehrkreissanitätsspark. This is the Wehrkreis medical depot, and principal storage place. It functions in a manner quite similar to the Hauptsanitätsspark. There is one Wehrkreis Sanitätspark for each Wehrkreis, organized on the following basis:

- (a) Abteilung Arzneimittel. Medicaments Section.
- (b) Abteilung Verbandmittel. Dressing Section.
- (c) Abteilung Geräte. Instrument Section.
- (d) Abteilung Truppenausrüstung. Medical equipment for troops in the field.

(e) Abteilung Formulare. Forms Section.

(2) Sammelsanitätspark. Those are medical collecting depots, the number of which will vary depending on the area served. Those may requisition supplies either from the Wehrkreis Sanitätspark or the Hauptsanitätsspark. Requisitions for supply are forwarded by way of the Wehrkreisvorwaltung, Sachgebiet E.

(3) Sanitätsbeutesammelstellen. These are medical depots designed for storing, sorting and testing of captured enemy equipment, and reissuing to depots such material as is found satisfactory for use. Such installations are found principally in frontier Wehrkreise, but may also operate in rear areas.

(4) Additional information on medical supply may be obtained by referring to Medical Intelligence Summaries No. 21 and 22.

g. Heereszahnstationen. (Army Dental Centers). Only a few have been identified, and most of these occupy quarters in Reservelazarette.

h. Orthopädische Versorgungsstelle. (Orthopedic Welfare Center). These establishments are responsible for the supply of special footwear to battle casualties. They are closely connected to Reservelazarette but one Versorgungsstelle appears sufficient to serve a number of hospitals.

4. Wehrkreisverwaltung. (Administrative Headquarters of the Wehrkreis). The Wehrkreisverwaltung in its position as an Administrative Headquarters, plays a part in the administration of many medical installations, as previously mentioned. In addition it has many unrelated functions which are of interest to the Medical Service. For this reason it has seemed practical to outline briefly the structure and function of the Wehrkreisverwaltung for the purpose of information. The organizational chart, as laid down in German Army manuals, outlines the following Sachgebiet (Sections) and some of their respective administrative responsibilities. It will be remembered that they may vary somewhat in different Wehrkreise.

a. Sachgebiet A. General office routine, pay, expenditure, army specialist schools, Wehrkreis libraries, administrative control of veterinary hospitals, accounting, paymasters' service.

b. Sachgebiet B. Auditing accounts of Ordnance Headquarters and Units.

c. Sachgebiet C. Procuring and issuing of rations.

d. Sachgebiet D. Quartering and rationing of Heeresstandortsverwaltung (Army Garrison Administrative Headquarters), and auditing their accounts.

e. Sachgebiet E. Administration of hospitals, including auditing of accounts, legal matters, and administration of civilian employees, operation of army clothing depots.

f. Sachgebiet F. Army construction headquarters, together with its branch units.

g. Sachgebiet G. General quartering.

5. Prisoners of War.

a. The operation of Prisoner of War Camps, and the administration of PW affairs is a split responsibility. In every Wehrkreis there is found a Kommandeur der Kriegsgefangenen im Wehrkreis or Wehrkreis PW Commander. He is believed to be only attached to Wehrkreis headquarters, and is in fact subordinated to the Chef des Kriegsgefangenenwesens (Head of the PW Organization) at the OKW (High Command of the Armed Forces). The Wehrkreis PW Commander is responsible for the operation of all PW camps in the area.

b. The following is a list of the types of PW camps normally found in the Wehrkreis:

- (1) Oflag - Officers P/W camp.
- (2) Stalag - Enlisted men's P/W camp.
- (3) Dulag - Transit P/W camp.
- (4) Marlag - Navy P/W camp.
- (5) Milag - Merchant Navy PW camp.
- (6) Ilag - Civilian Internment camp.
- (7) BAB - Building and labor battalion.
- (8) Dachdecker Bn - Tiler battalion.
- (9) Glaser Bn - Glazier battalion.

c. Prisoner of War Camps ordinarily are organized on a Wehrkreis basis and bear the Roman numeral of the Wehrkreis in which they are located. They are further identified by a serial letter, and frequently by the name of the nearest town, e.g., Oflag IV b Konigstein.

d. Maintenance of records on P/W, rationing, etc., is apparently a function of the Wehrkreisverwaltung. In the Wehrkreis where this headquarters has been found, the problems of Prisoners of War come under Sachgebiet E. Administrative matters are handled by a branch known as Kriegsgefangenenangelegenheiten, while rations are the responsibility of a branch titled Verpflegung von Kriegsgefangenen. It is probable that supervision of medical care for PW's and responsibility for prisoner of war hospitals is shared by Sachgebiet E and Abteilung IV b of the Wehrkreis headquarters.

6. Wehrkreis Veterinary Service.

a. The Wehrkreisveterinär or the Wehrkreis veterinary officer is the director of all veterinary services in the Wehrkreis. His section is known as Abteilung IV c. Germany has maintained a fairly large number of horse-drawn vehicles for purposes of transportation in certain units, and her army requires a considerable number of horses. This has meant a fairly large sized organization built around the care of those animals. There is nothing to indicate that the German Veterinary Service is interested in animals other than horses, nor does it appear to have any of the related functions assumed by the U. S. Army Veterinary Service.

b. The organization and chain of command of the Wehrkreis veterinary organization is quite similar to the medical set-up. The various units under the Wehrkreisveterinär are listed below in outline form:

- (1) Wehrkreisveterinäruntersuchungsstellen -- Veterinary Research Centers.
- (2) Veterinärparks -- Veterinary Depots.
 - (a) Heimatveterinärparks -- Home Veterinary Depots.
 - (b) Wohrkreisveterinärparks -- Wehrkreis Veterinary Depots.
- (3) Pferdelazarotte -- Horse Hospitals.
 - (a) Heimatpferdelazarotte -- Home Horse Hospitals.
 - (b) Wohrkreis Pferdelazarotte -- Wehrkreis Horse Hospitals.
- (4) Heeres-Rennstall-Mitor -- Army Remount Depots.
- (5) Heimat Pferdeparks -- Home Horse Parks.
- (6) Pferdesammelstellen -- Horse Collecting Point.

c. The Wehrkreis Veterinary Service will be the subject of a subsequent Medical Intelligence Summary.

7. Miscellaneous Wehrkreis Installations of medical interest.

a. A number of small sections in the Wehrkreisverwaltung have been named, but little is known of their function. Some, which may be of interest to the Medical Department, are listed below together with any available information:

- (1) Notstandshilfen an Hinterbliebene von Soldaten - Welfare aids for survivors of soldiers; under Sachgebiet A.
- (2) Reisekosten für Krankenbesucher - Travel expenses for visitors of sick relatives in Armed Forces hospitals; under Sachgebiet A.
- (3) Leichenüberführung - Transportation of corpses; under Sachgebiet E.
- (4) Totenangelegenheiten - Affairs of Soldiers killed in battle; under Sachgebiet E.
- (5) Abfindung der Beratenden Ärzte mit Kriegsbosoldung, Familienunterhalt, etc., - Payment of consulting doctors with active service pay, family subsidy, etc.,; under Sachgebiet A.
- (6) Sozialversicherung der Krankenschwestern im Sanitätsdienst und Abfindung des Deutschen Rote Kreuz Personals - Insurance of nurses and pay of Red Cross personnel. Location within the Wehrkreisverwaltung is not known.

b. Offices in the categories listed above have not been found in every Wehrkreis. However, because of the duties performed it is assumed that their functions will be found somewhere within the structure of the Wehrkreisverwaltung.

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Ibteilung IV b (Radical Section) Kornsarzt

Wohrkreis

Abteilung IV c
(Veterinary Section)
Veterinärarzt

Abteilung IV c
(Veterinary Section)
Veterinärarzt

Sanitätsabteilungen	Heereszahnstationen	Orthopädische Versorgungsstellen	Pfordelazazotopark	Veterinärparke	Pfordesammelparken
Hoeresanitäts- strufoin	Lazaretto	Hoeres-Romonte- Mitor	Hohmat	Pfordeparke	Wehrkreisveterinär- untorschungsstollen

Hygienische
Untersuchungs-
stelle

Chemische
Untersuchungs-
stelle

Sammel-
sanitätsparko